

TOWN OF NORWAY
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March 5, 2021

Dear Ladies & Gentlemen:

The Maine Town & City Clerks Legislative Policy Committee is strongly opposed to LD 208 “An Act to Expand Absentee Voting”. 95% of clerks in Maine who responded to a survey were opposed to this bill. Comments revealed that the changes would significantly impact the work that must be done to adequately prepare for Election day.

Legislation proposes to:

Eliminate the 3 day deadline for a voter to request an absentee ballot. In response: Having the 3 day cutoff is crucial for clerks to be able to prepare for the election, such as to print the voting lists, fine tune election worker status, catch up on batching absentee ballots that are being returned, implement early processing of absentee ballots, provide for the special exception absentee ballot requests, stay on top of voter registration changes and really just a myriad of many other things that popup unexpectedly. Keeping this deadline in place is really key to allowing adequate time so clerks are able to be confident that they are well prepared for the election, especially in the larger towns and cities. Also, with the predicted trend for increased absentee voting, we simply need that time to prepare and deal with those increasing numbers. The election is a huge responsibility, especially when Clerks also have their other regular duties in the office that require their time; they don’t leave their regular jobs when it is time for an election, it all has to get done.

Allow a 3rd party runner to return a voter’s absentee ballot by 8 pm on Election Day, rather than within 2 business days of issuance. In response: When a third person is involved, things need to be kept tight not loose. We want to maintain the integrity of that ballot and it shouldn’t be laying around, sitting somewhere with the 3rd party, out of the voters hands for very long. Definitely, the deadline should not be 8 pm election day because that just adds another issue to clerk responsibilities. Add another day if you have to, but I wouldn’t add much time, because it is someone else’s ballot that the 3rd person is responsible for.

Allow in-person absentee voting on Election Day. In response: That really isn’t absentee is it? Absentee really means not on election day at polls. In smaller towns the absentee voting would be right where regular voting is going on, unless you mandated another location and that would be considered another polling place. This is not a good idea. Voters have plenty of time to get their voting accomplished via absentee, either in person

with the clerk or through the mail ahead of time. And for those that have something unexpected come up after the 3 day deadline, they are allowed to vote via the special circumstance provision. This doesn't need to be another responsibility added to the already long list for election day. It isn't taking away voters rights to have them be responsible to meet deadlines to get their vote in. They can't vote the day after the election can they? Again, please keep in mind the overwhelming responsibility the Clerk has to prepare for and implement elections. Let's not add more load to it. It is a tough job at best!

Thank you.

Shirley H. Boyce, Town Clerk